

Engineering the future of energy



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From Alaska to California, Anvil Corporation has engineered projects for every refinery in the Pacific Northwest over the past 50 years, as well as many major sites in the western United States. A multi-discipline engineering contractor known for its design, procurement, field engineering, and project management services, the organization has amassed a significant reputation in the North American energy, oil and gas sectors.

To a large degree, Anvil's success has been founded on the company's ability to cultivate and maintain long-term working relationships with its partners and clients. As the firm prepares to celebrate half a century in business in 2021, Chief Operating Officer Cody Steinmetz and Board Chairman John Macpherson discuss Anvil's celebrated heritage and evolution as a key industry partner.

“Founded in 1971, Anvil's primary business

involves refinery revamp and modernization projects,” John explains. “Mostly working on fairly small projects averaging maybe 1000-person-hours, we have grown slowly from a tiny company of one or two people into an organization turning over more than \$70 million.

“We always figured that by performing projects that last, we could earn the trust of clients that value those services and they would

return to us again and again. That is exactly what has happened. We've performed great work, earned trust, and it's worked out very well for us.”

In recent years, one of Anvil's defining features has been the company's ownership structure. As a 100 percent employee-owned organization, Anvil benefits from a team that feels empowered to drive the business forward and further its reputation in the industry.



“Employee ownership is a true differentiator for us,” Cody states. “It facilitates the creation of a different culture in which people are traditionally more engaged and more invested, and that comes through in our partnerships with clients. Our employees understand that their own success is very closely linked to our clients’ success, so we all work together as a team to achieve results for the client, and as a consequence for ourselves.”

“Anvil was founded by an entrepreneurial engineer who, upon retirement, wanted his dream to keep going, so he sold the company to an Employee Stock Ownership Plan,” John adds. “It was critical in allowing us to remain independent and continue our culture. If we’d been sold to a large company, all that would have disappeared.”

By taking a different path, and inviting employees to share in the company’s success, Anvil has achieved rare longevity, and along the way, a collection of long-term suppliers and clients. Working closely and collaboratively, Anvil and its partners are able to overcome the challenges of the business world and avoid unwanted surprises.

“The clients we’ve worked with over the longest period of time regularly update us about their capital and maintenance programs so that we can run our resources smoothly

and be proactive for our suppliers, particularly in terms of equipment and material delivery,” John reports. “Of course, issues often arise, changes happen, but by working together, communicating clearly, and making joint decisions, we give our clients the opportunity to understand the impact of their choices and avoid big surprises – nobody in business likes being surprised.”

Some of Anvil’s relationships span the entire length of the company’s history. For example, for many years, the business has enjoyed a fruitful association with refineries across multiple owners, some for nearly 50 years, including the BP Cherry Point Refinery and the Phillips 66 Ferndale Refinery, and the Phillips 66 Billings Refinery since 1998.

“We opened an office in Billings, Montana in 1998 and we’ve been doing work at the Phillips 66 refinery there ever since,” Cody points out. “Elsewhere, we have a number of similar relationships with remarkable staying power when you consider that, over those time periods, on both sides of the fence, there’s inevitably going to be staffing turnover, yet a core relationship and cultural alignment has endured.”

Among the projects Anvil has carried out for clients like BP and Phillips 66 are FCC and delayed coker revamps, as well as overhauling

a range of instrumentation and digital network systems. Ever-changing requirements and ongoing improvements in technology mean that demand for the company’s services is relatively steady.

“When it comes to control systems, modernization, SIS type projects, and a lot of electrical infrastructure, the landscape is always changing,” Cody notes. “The need to upgrade some of that electrical infrastructure and maintain it for the long run is becoming more and more common. We are seeing a shift from the traditional unit-focused revamp projects to more modernization efforts within the infrastructure of those facilities.”

Whatever the project, at Anvil, the most important element is always safety. In 2020, the company reached a milestone eight million



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ACS is proud to have assisted Anvil in providing excellent service to the energy, oil, and gas sectors for over 35 years and looks forward to the next 35 years and beyond



Advanced Control Systems would like to congratulate Anvil on their 50 years of service in the energy, oil, and gas sectors. ACS works closely with Anvil to provide custom control solutions to their clients across the US and Canada.

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hours worked without any time lost to injuries, and John hopes the no-incident streak can continue long into the future. “Safety is born out of a culture where everyone recognizes that their actions affect everybody else,” he says. “At the end of the day, everybody wants to go home safely.”

“We always open meetings with a safety note and we always proactively talk about incidents that could happen,” Cody adds. “That awareness and vigilance has allowed us to achieve our long safety record.”

“On top of that,” he continues, “I can’t think of a single client we work with that doesn’t take the same approach to safety we do, in that they empower their employees and their service providers to assess risk, look out for each other, and put a stop to work if they believe a situation to be hazardous. Refreshingly for us, it’s an approach supported by pretty much every single client with whom we operate.”

While many engineering companies have come and gone through the years, Anvil has remained profitable and resilient no matter what the world has thrown its way. This has never been truer than in 2021 when, despite the pandemic, the company has still found ways to celebrate, and reflect upon, a milestone 50 years in business.

Alongside a dedicated webpage recalling the company’s storied past and accomplishments through the years, Anvil hopes to host a staff

gathering, as well as dedicate a plaque in the name of its Founder, Larry K. Levorsen, later in 2021. More than simply an opportunity to look back on former glories however, Cody hopes that the anniversary will act as a platform for future growth.

“We have new leadership in place this year and, as we turn 50, with the worst of the pandemic coming to an end, it feels like we’re moving into new territory with a nice clean break,” he asserts. “One area in particular that we’ve been keeping an eye on for some time is sustainability. We have an ever-evolving strategy on that front, which will play a big role for us in the future.”

“The pace of change is increasing and that is reflected in our strategy,” Cody declares. “It means we need to engage a larger group in that strategy development, tapping into the knowledge, experience, and creativity of our entire organization to come up with areas of focus so we can be the partner of choice for our clients. We need to bring fresh ideas and innovative solutions to the table, supporting clients as they go on their journey.”

In the months and years ahead, complex revamp projects will continue to be a key focus for Anvil and the business aims to maintain its reputation for quality. As new leaders like President Dena Lund come to the fore, the organization is confident of successfully carrying out its long-term five-year strategy that should

see Anvil well on its way to another 50 years of triumph.

“We are highly experienced in multiple disciplines and our current and future clients are always going to need that specialist expertise,” John proclaims. “Whether it’s the energy, oil, or chemical sector, we expect to be supporting companies with advanced control systems and cyber security needs. We live in a technological age, so we see a lot of potential for expansion and hope to solve complicated problems together. We can help companies evolve their systems rapidly, making them safe and secure, both from a cyber security and operational safety standpoint.”

“It’s an exciting time to be in this industry,” Cody concurs. “We expect to experience some growth as the energy sector continues to evolve, and within the next five years, we hope to branch out and take advantage of new opportunities that we haven’t had in the past, as well as continuing our traditional work.”

“Our goal for the next three to six months is to formulate a good plan that we are confident in, and that has the input of a diverse group of thinkers baked into it. After that, we’ll rally together and row in the same direction. Ultimately, the long-term is harder to predict, but we’d like to see a future where we are still great partners of choice within the oil and gas industry, as well as active in other industrial sectors and new regional geographies.”

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